

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 08146 301855Z

70

ACTION EUR-25

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R 301337Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9271

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LISBON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: MAY TRENDS

REF: MOSCOW 7712 (NOTAL)

1. REFTEL, WHICH ASSESSES PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY
IN SOVIET LEADERSHIP, IS EMBASSY'S PRINCIPAL COMMENT
ON MAY TRENDS. THIS MESSAGE SUPPLEMENTS THAT
ANALYSIS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO FOREIGN POLICY
ASPECTS.

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 08146 301855Z

2. SUMMARY. DESPITE THE SHOCK OF THE BRANDT DEPARTURE, THE HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF THE DANGER TO PRESIDENT NIXON'S POSITION, AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GAULLISM AS FRANCE'S MAJOR POLITICAL FORCE, THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS FLAGGED NEITHER IN ITS PURSUIT OF DETENTE NOR IN ITS DESIRE TO SHOW THE WORLD THAT DETENTE IS STILL ON TRACK. WITHIN THE COMMUNIST CAMP THE SOVIETS SEEM TO BE RELEGATING PLANS FOR MULTI-LATERAL COMMUNIST CONFERENCES TO THE BACK BURNER; THERE ARE INSUBSTANTIAL BUT PERSISTENT REPORTS OF NEW SOVIET EFFORTS TO TIGHTEN COORDINATION IN EASTERN EUROPE; AND MOSCOW SEEMS TO BE NEARING THE END OF ITS PATIENCE WITH THE CHINESE HANDLING OF THE HELICOPTER INCIDENT. TWO VISITS TO SYRIA BY GROMYKO DURING MAY, AS WELL AS THE LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER'S TRIP TO MOSCOW, EMPHASIZE THE SOVIET DETERMINATION TO WIELD EVERY AVAILABLE LEVER FOR KEEPING THEMSELVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST PLAY. THE MONTH ALSO SAW A DRAMATIC STRENGTHENING OF SOVIET TIES WITH ARGENTINA, POSSIBLY THE BEGINNING OF A SOVIET EFFORT TO FILL THE VACUUM LEFT BY ALLENDE'S FALL. FINALLY, THE SOVIETS SEEM CLOSE TO A DECISION TO ESTABLISH SOME SORT OF DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WITH THE NEW PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

3. DETENTE. IF INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FRG, FRANCE, AND THE U.S. DEFLECTED THE SOVIETS IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY FROM THEIR PURSUIT OF DETENTE WITH THE WEST, THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SHOW IT. SWALLOWING PRIVATE CONCERN ABOUT THE NEW GERMAN CHANCELLOR AND FOREIGN MINISTER, THEY HAVE PAINTED THEM AS FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS - INDEED ARCHITECTS - OF OSTPOLITIK. IN FRANCE THEY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED CHABAN, BUT THEY ARE NOW BUSY CLOTHING GISCARD IN THE MANTLE OF GAULLIST CONTINUITY. DESPITE THEIR AWARENESS OF PRESIDENT NIXON'S DIFFICULTIES, THEY HAVE USED THE PONOMAREV VISIT TO THE U.S. TO SPREAD THE IMPORTANCE OF U.S.-SOVIET DETENTE ACROSS THE COLUMNS OF ALL THE MAJOR NEWSPAPERS, TO EMPHASIZE THE BIPARTISAN AND LONG-TERM U.S. INTEREST IN BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, AND - INFERENTIALLY - TO SHOW THAT EVEN A HARD-LINER LIKE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 08146 301855Z

PONOMAREV IS SQUARELY BEHIND THE WHOLE PROCESS. AND IN SPEARATE BILATERAL TALKS IN MOSCOW ON INCIDENTS AT SEA AND LAW OF THE SEA, THE SOVIETS SHOWED A STRONG DESIRE TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE U.S.

4. COMMUNIST CAMP. SOVIET EFFORTS TO WHIP UP FERVOR FOR EARLY COMMUNIST CONFERENCES ON THE EUROPEAN AND WORLD SCALE MAY BE SLACKENING SOMEWHAT BECAUSE OF LACK OF

ENTHUSIASM AMONG MANY BRETHREN. THE POLISH AMBASSADOR, AN OLD HAND AT PARTY AFFAIRS, TOLD AMBASSADOR STOESSEL LAST WEEK THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCH MEETINGS ARE NOT GOOD RIGHT NOW, THAT MORE TIME IS NEEDED, AND THAT IT'S BETTER AT THE MOMENT TO CONCENTRATE ON MORE CURRENT THINGS. REPORTS PERSIST OF SOVIET EFFORTS TO TIGHTEN BLOC COORDINATION, A MAJOR SOVIET PRIORITY. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD(SEPTEL) THAT AGREEMENT WAS REACHED IN PRINCIPLE AT THE APRIL WARSAW PACT MEETING TO HOLD A CEMA SUMMIT LEVEL OF PARTY CHIEFS) SOMETIME AFTER THE REGULAR CEMA COUNCIL MEETING IN MIDJUNE. ON THE CHINA SIDE, THE HEAD OF THE SOVIET MFA FIRST FAR EAST DIVISION HAS BEEN HINTING THAT THE SOVIETS ARE CONSIDERING RETALIATION AGAINST THE PRC FOR SEIZING THE SOVIET HELICOPTER AND CREW.

5. MIDDLE EAST. GROMYKO'S TWO VISITS TO SYRIA DURING MAY ARE A SIGN OF SOVIET DETERMINATION TO KEEP IN THE MIDDLE EAST GAME. PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY IN MOSCOW, THE SOVIETS ARE EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR AN EARLY REACTIVATION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE SOVIET RECEPTION FOR LIBYAN PRIME MINISTER JALLUD, DEFENSE MINISTER GRECHKO'S TRIP TO ALGERIA (AN EARLY JUNE ALGERIAN VISIT BY GROMYKO IS ALSO STORNGLY RUMORED), AND SOME SIGNS OF AN OLIVE BRANCH BEING EXTENDED IN CAIRO'S DIRECTION INDICATE A SOVIET DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN THEIR TIES IN THE ARAB WORLD AS A PRELUDE TO CASTING THEMSELVES IN THE ROLE OF PROTECTOR OF THE ARABS AT GENEVA.

6. THIRD WORLD. WITH VISITS BY JALLUD AND NIGERIAN LEADER GOWON IN MAY, AND WITH AN ANNOUNCED VISIT BY AFGHANI PRESIDENT DAUD IN EARLY JUNE, THE SOVIETS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 08146 301855Z

STEPPING UP THEIR ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPING WORLD. PERHAPS MOST STRIKING IS THE BLUE-RIBBON RECEPTION THEY GAVE TO THE ARGENTINE ECONOMICS MINISTER, WHO WAS RECEIVED BY ALL THREE SOVIET LEADERS. SINCE ALLENDE FELL, THE SOVIETS HAVE HAD TROUBLE FINDING IDEOLOGICAL SOUL-MATES IN LATIN AMERICA, THOUGH THEY HAVE REMAINED ALERT TO OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND TIES (SUCH AS THE ARMS DEAL WITH PERU PROVIDED). THE ECONOMIC FLAVOR OF THEIR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH ARGENTINA GIVES THEM A CHANCE TO TEST THE WATER IN BUENOS AIRES WITHOUT UNDERTAKING TOO GREAT A POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO PERON OR TO HIS SUCCESSOR. STOESSEL

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